



# Clark County Development News

Clark County Community Development

2009 Second Quarter



Marty Snell, director  
Clark County  
Community  
Development

## **“One step forward, two steps...”**

To finish this cliché’ would you say “...back...forward...or...sideways”?

The first half of 2009 has been one of the most challenging times we in Community Development have lived through, both personally and professionally. After significant staff reductions in 2008, it became apparent that even our reduced forecasts for activity needed re-adjusting. We were once again faced with significant decisions by mid-year. Due to the lowest volume of business in many years and overall county revenue shortfalls, we were once again faced with re-balancing the budget. This was accomplished with a fifth round of staff reductions and with the Board of County Commissioner’s decision to adopt increased fees. We are now trying to adjust to a new normal in the department and look to the future.

To re-engage in the priorities I set out for 2009, I am eager to become more involved and communicative with staff, our customers and the Board of County Commissioners. Whether it is building or continuing relationships with our customers or making changes to the development code, I am working with staff to meet these challenges head-on.

We also have a significant amount of work relative to instituting a new way of tracking our time. The Board adopted the fees in mid-June on the premise that Community Development would be revising how we charge for our services. One school of thought is that we go by a strict hourly rate, not unlike a consultant, and another school of thought is a revised fixed rate, not unlike how we charge today. I argue that we will end up with some fees charged with an hourly rate and others with a fixed rate based on some pre-determined number of hours. As progress is made on this project, we will engage the building and development community for comments on the project.

Of the priorities listed above, I feel that building relationships and developing a department mission reflect my highest priorities. I will be spending more time with staff, whether in the office or in the field, in an effort to better understand their functions. This will assist me in understanding our role and some of the code changes that will allow us to operate more efficiently and economically.

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## Real Estate Sales Activity

The Regional Multiple Listing Service "Market Action" report covers the Portland market as well as Clark County. In August 2008 it changed from reporting the average number of days a single-family dwelling was for sale during a current listing to the average **total** number of days a home is on the market for consecutive listings when the time in between re-listing is 31 days or less. The total market time does not include the days the property was off the market.

In Clark County the average total market time in June 2009 was 153 days from listing to acceptance of an offer. The average total market time in the Portland metro area was 147 days.

At the end of June 2009 the average sales price was \$244,300. This is a 12 percent decrease from June 2008 when it was \$278,300. Pending sales were up 19 percent in the second quarter of 2009 when compared with the second quarter of 2008 while closed sales were down 2 percent. New listings are down 30 percent from 3,882 in the second quarter 2008 to 2,682 in the second quarter 2009. The most expensive homes were in Lake Oswego/West Linn (\$398,000), West Portland (\$350,800), and North Washington County/Sauvie Island (\$333,000). The least expensive homes were in Central Vancouver (\$143,900).

## In-migration

In the second quarter 2009 there were 5,959 drivers that moved into Clark County while in the second quarter 2008 that number was 6,080 according to the Washington State Department of Licensing. That reflects a two percent decline in the number of out-of-state driver's licenses that were turned in during the second quarter 2009 compared to the second quarter 2008.



Remodeled home in  
Salmon Creek

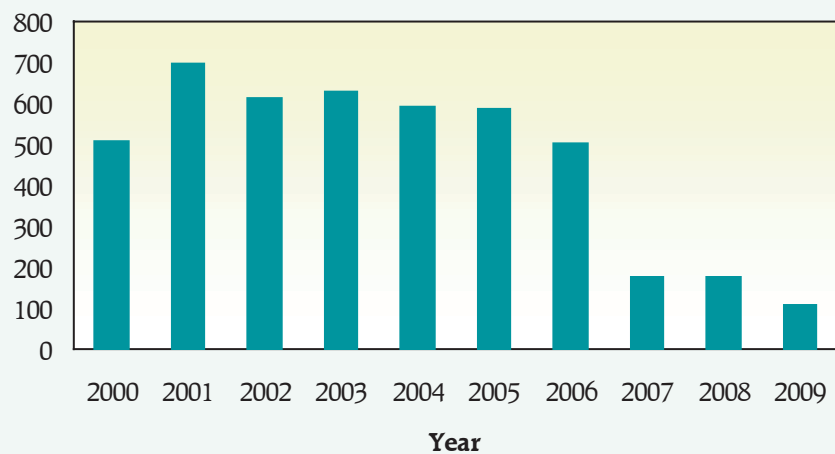


## Development Activity

### Single Family Residential Permits

- In the second quarter 2009 there were 104 permits issued compared to 175 permits issued in the second quarter 2008. That is a 40 percent decrease.
- The historical average for this quarter 2000 through 2009 is 457 permits.

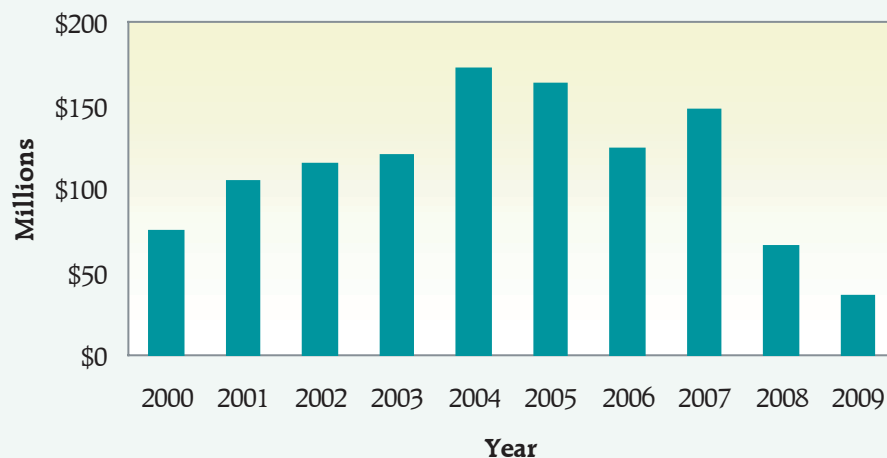
Q2 Single Family Residential Permits



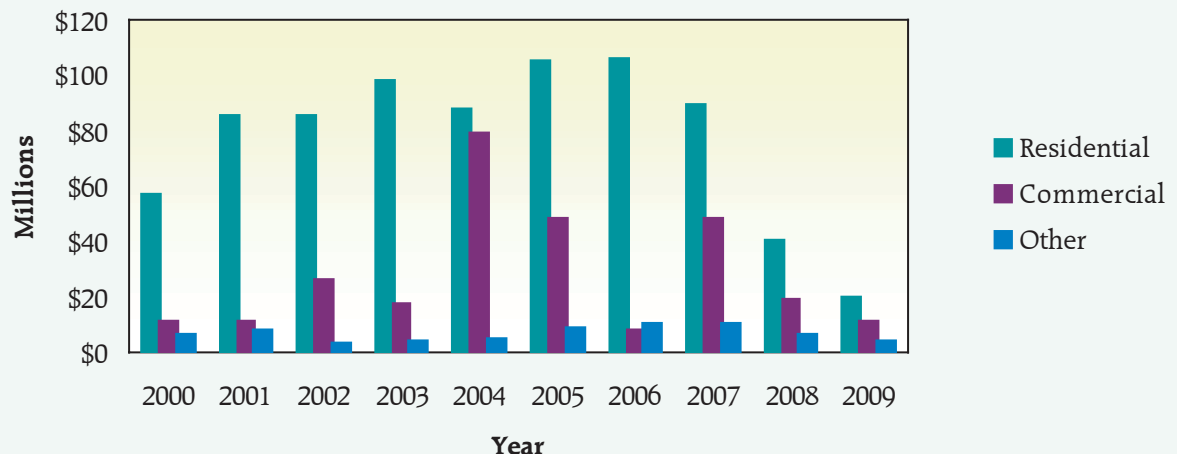
### Construction Valuations

- Comparing second quarter 2009 with second quarter 2008 total construction valuation is down 46 percent. Valuation was \$35 million compared to \$65 million in the second quarter 2008. Historical construction valuation for the second quarter 2000 through 2009 is \$112 million.
- Commercial construction valuation was \$11 million in the second quarter 2009. This is a 42 percent decrease from 2008 when commercial construction valuation was \$19 million. Thirty-one percent of the total construction valuation for this quarter was commercial projects.
- There was a 50 percent decrease in residential construction valuation when comparing second quarter 2009 to second quarter 2008. Residential construction valuation was \$20 million this quarter compared to \$40 million in the second quarter 2008.

#### Q2 Construction Valuation



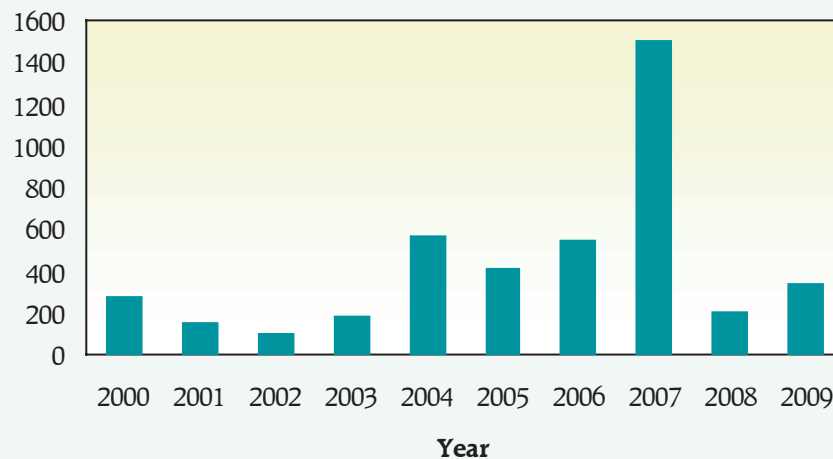
#### Q2 Construction Valuation Mix



### Land Division Lots

- The number of new approved lots for the second quarter rose 72 percent compared to the second quarter of 2008. There were 337 lots approved this quarter while in the second quarter 2008 only 196 lots were approved.
- The historical average for the second quarter 2000 through 2009 is 423 approved lots. However, the second quarter 2007 skews that average with a record breaking 1501 lots approved in one quarter.

**Q2 Land Division Lots**



Development Activity through Second Quarter 2009			
Year	Single Family Residence Permits	Commercial & Residential Construction Valuation (mil.)	Lots Approved
2009 YTD	162	71	406
2008	592	235	1023
2007	1245	405	2070
2006	1551	469	2535
2005	2142	583	2173
2004	2106	533	2241
2003	2157	491	1941
2002	2112	412	1558
2001	2329	417	592
2000	1825	295	972





JR Merit Warehouse in  
Cold Creek Industrial  
Park

*from page 1*

With the comments above I say the two steps will be sideways first, then forward. One step sideways to re-examine and re-adjust and one step forward to a renewed, invigorated department.



For an alternate format,  
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